

TOP SECRET

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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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DIA review(s) completed.

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State Department review completed

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SUMMARY

FAR EAST

2. Sino-Viet Minh action predicted (page 4).

25X1

Note

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- 2 -

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FAR EAST

2. Sino-Viet Minh action predicted:

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[Redacted]

Viet Minh plans to launch a limited offensive before 20 April against the northern line of the French defense perimeter in Tonkin. The attacking force will include 2,000 Chinese Communist troops and will attempt to cut French supply lines. Other action, probably in the nature of feints, will be undertaken west of Hanoi and along the Tonkin coast.

Meanwhile, French officers in northwest Tonkin have told the US Military Attache that the column which crossed the northwest border two weeks ago consists of one battalion of trained Chinese troops, which are either provincial or regular Chinese Communist forces or Chinese Nationalists retreating before Chinese Communist forces. Elements of a Viet Minh regiment have been identified nearby, and the US Military Attache is therefore inclined to interpret the incursion as part of a joint Chinese Communist-Viet Minh effort to divert French troops from the Delta defenses.

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Comment: [Redacted]

[Redacted] the Viet Minh is planning a series of minor attacks on the northern perimeter of the Delta, but no evidence is available to indicate definitely that the Chinese Communists would commit a small force in a limited action so near the center of French control in Tonkin. A Chinese Communist broadcast of 11 April charging the French and puppet troops with repeated intrusions into Chinese territory might be used to justify the presence of Chinese Communist troops in Indochina. A joint plan, which included the threat of Chinese Communist operations in northwest Tonkin and was designed to disperse French forces and to affect French morale, is quite plausible; a French force of more than battalion strength has already been transferred by air from the Delta to confront the incursion across the border.

- 4 -

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt